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TOP SECRET-DAUNT

CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF HANDLING OF U-2 INCIDENT

May 1:

1. On Sunday, May 1, at approximately 0330 hours, Washington, D. C., local time, personnel in the CIA operations control center [REDACTED]

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2. All key Project personnel assembled in the Agency control center the morning of May first [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] to cover the possible loss of the aircraft. Present, in addition to Agency Project personnel, were Mr. Walter Bonney, Press Relations Officer, NASA, and Colonel Leo P. Geary, USAF, Project Officer for that service. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Richard Helms, Acting Deputy Director, Plans, and Mr. Hugh Cumming, Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, arrived, and a full scale discussion over the proposed exact text of a suitable cover story release ensued. With the arrival of Mr. Richard M. Bissell, Jr., Deputy Director, Plans, shortly after 1530 hours local time, it was decided by the group that a story should be released from the aircraft's home base at Adana, Turkey, to the effect that a NASA high altitude weather research airplane was missing; the plane had last been heard of in the vicinity of Lake Van, Turkey, at 0700 hours, and that at last radio contact the pilot had reported oxygen difficulty. Mr. Cumming informed Mr. Dillon by telephone of the substance of the agreed story and obtained his concurrence. The story differed in some significant aspects from the one prepared in advance of the mission and distributed to the Field Commander at Adana, to Headquarters USAFE, Headquarters USAF, and to the CIA representatives in friendly countries involved in the actual flight plan. In its final form in CIA Headquarters, it reflected the varied political estimates and inputs of the Department of State and CIA, based upon the latest information and assumptions that the aircraft was down deep within the Soviet Union where any story connected with navigational error, pilot hypoxia, or aircraft malfunction would be difficult to sustain. Yet, in

TOP SECRET-DAUNT

TOP SECRET-DAUNT

the absence of any verified information on the actual fate of the mission, condition of the aircraft or pilot, or certainty that the Soviets would admit to a penetration of such depth, it was felt that such a covering release did offer the best prospects of being sustained (1) in the event the aircraft was totally destroyed and the pilot killed, or (2) should the Soviets take credit for shooting it down, while at the same time electing to move the reported scene of the incident closer to their borders in order to conceal from their own people and the world in general the depth of the mission penetration over the heavily guarded and restricted Russian heartland.

May 2-3:

3. The revised cover story as above, which was then backed up by an actual mission flight plan consistent with the purported flight, was sent through CIA communications channels to the Commander of Detachment 10-10, Adana, Turkey, with an information copy to the [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] and one to Headquarters, USAFE. The Field Commander was directed to release this story, after local coordination with the Adana Base Commander [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] who would be in a position to assess its potential impact on the local Turkish political scene. Although released by the Adana Base Commander on 2 May, it was not actually issued in print, however, until early 3 May, and then in a news dispatch datelined Istanbul, Turkey. The announcement said additionally that a search was being instituted for the missing plane.

May 4:

4. On Wednesday, 4 May, before the Soviets had made any disclosure whatsoever, there were meetings at the Department of State attended by Colonel William Burke of CIA, Mr. Richard H. Davis, Mr. James L. Berry, and Ambassador Bohlen, who carefully went over a question and answer brief prepared by the Agency, principally for use by NASA in the event of Soviet disclosure but designed to be circulated to all affected parties, including USAF Headquarters, USAFE Headquarters, the Department of State, as well as Detachment 10-10 at Adana. It was assumed that it might have to be amended, depending upon the nature of whatever disclosure was made, since it consisted of answers to hypothetical questions that might be asked by the press about

TOP SECRET-DAUNT

the aircraft, the whole upper air research program, and details in support of the cover story mission for the May first flight. After the contents of this brief were cleared in the meeting referred to above, it was dispatched to all interested parties in Washington and overseas, the latter through Agency communications channels.

May 5:

5. On Thursday, 5 May, following receipt of Khrushchev's first public disclosure to the Supreme Soviet, there was a meeting in the Department of State in Mr. Raymond Hare's office, attended by Mr. Davis, Mr. Berry of State, and General Cabell and Mr. Bissell of CIA. This meeting was subsequently transferred to Mr. Dillon's office, following the latter's return from High Point where the NSC was meeting that morning. At this time it was understood that the Department of State should handle all publicity, pursuant to the High Point decision referred to below.

6. After the NSC meeting at High Point, the President, Secretary Gates, Mr. Gordon Gray, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Dulles, and General Goodpaster met to consider the handling of the U-2 incident. It was agreed that the President should not be personally involved, and it was determined that the Department of State should handle all publicity.

7. Mr. Hagerty at the White House then made a release stating that the President had ordered an investigation of the entire matter.

8. The NASA Press Officer, Mr. Bonney, in a conversation on the phone with Mr. Hagerty at the White House about the same time as the meeting in Mr. Dillon's office was breaking up, received a suggestion from Mr. Hagerty that he hold a press conference as soon as possible as a means of handling the heavy volume of press inquiries; such a conference was convened at 1330 hours in NASA Headquarters. The notification that press relations were to be centralized at the Department of State apparently did not reach NASA in time to prevent this press conference. The NASA press conference was based on the question and answer brief referred to earlier. In response to direct questioning, Mr. Bonney reportedly indicated that the U-2 aircraft had been grounded for equipment checks. On learning of

TOP SECRET-DAUNT

TOP SECRET-DAUNT

this from Mr. Bonney, CIA sent a message to the U-2 unit in Turkey and later on 9 May to the one in Japan advising them to stand down and to indicate if questioned the stand down was for the purpose of checking equipment, a statement still consistent with the original cover story release. The Edwards Air Force Base NASA Detachment was likewise stood down for a "quick check" of equipment. The afternoon of 5 May, a message was sent to Headquarters USAF on Agency channels, coordinated with Headquarters USAF, calling off the dummy air search. It has been reported to CIA that at 1430 hours on 5 May, at the time of the NASA conference, Mr. Bohlen held a background meeting with some 35 press correspondents.

9. During the meeting in Mr. Dillon's office on 5 May, referred to in paragraph 5 above, the Department of State press release was prepared. During its preparation, Mr. Dillon talked on the telephone a number of times with General Goodpaster and at least once with Mr. Dulles regarding the wording of the release. The Department text, while making reference to the original statement of the missing plane and the oxygen failure, did not wholly commit the Department to this version. This release also referred to the fact that the Soviet Government had been queried as to details and any particulars concerning the fate of the pilot. In this same meeting, the text of the actual note asking the Soviets for details was agreed upon. Mr. Lincoln White, Department of State Press Officer, gave out this release and certain background remarks at 1245 hours.

May 6:

10. On 6 May, there were two radio and press briefings held at the Department of State. One, by Mr. Tully at 1110 hours, and the other by Mr. White at 1235 hours. It should be noted that in reply to a question, Mr. White stated that there was absolutely no "deliberate attempt to violate Soviet air space, and there never has been." This statement by Mr. White appears to have been an inference derived from the Department of State's release of the previous day, and in particular the long NASA statement of the same day.

May 7:

11. On 7 May, Khrushchev made his second and much more detailed statement to the Supreme Soviet, touching

TOP SECRET-DAUNT

TOP SECRET-DAUNT

off another series of extended meetings held in CIA and the Department of State. The first of these, occurring between noon and 1430 hours, took place in CIA in the Director's office, and was attended by Mr. Dulles, General Cabell, Mr. Cumming, and Mr. Bohlen from State, and General Goodpaster from the White House. In this session, a draft statement was agreed upon which did not go as far down the road toward admission as did the final release of the day. The final text was drafted by the Secretary of State and Mr. Dillon and cleared with the President, and was released at approximately 1800 hours, acknowledging that "a flight over Soviet territory was probably undertaken." The DCI was informed by phone of the final decision to, in effect, "come clean" in the 1800 press release. It should be noted that this release, occurring six days after the incident, was the first official statement casting doubts on the initial and only cover story release made from Adana. On the same day, a public display of a NASA-marked U-2 aircraft was held at the NASA hangar, Edwards Air Force Base, California, as the result of arrangements made by CIA with Lockheed Aircraft Company, to meet insistent press demands for detailed information on the plane and to further support the innocent uses of the U-2 itself.

May 8:

12. Sunday, May 8, there was no further statement made on the incident by the Department of State or any other Government Agency.

May 9:

13. On Monday morning, 9 May, about 1000 hours, a meeting was called in the office of the Secretary of State. In addition to the Secretary and Under Secretary, several members of his staff were present, including Messrs. Bohlen, Kohler, Jerry Smith and Macomber. Defense Secretary Gates and Deputy Secretary Douglas also attended, as well as Mr. Dulles and Mr. Bissell from CIA. At this meeting there was general consideration given to the best method of dealing with the Congressional and other problems arising out of Khrushchev's disclosures that he had the plane and the pilot alive. It was decided at this meeting that Mr. Dulles should brief the Congressional leaders, and tell them the basic facts in closed session, and that Mr. Herter would

TOP SECRET-DAUNT

issue, subject to Presidential approval, a press statement which would clarify the position of the United States Government. Later, after consultation with the White House, it was decided that Mr. Herter would also give his statement to the Congressional leaders prior to public release. At about 1130 hours, Mr. Bissell and Mr. Dulles returned to their offices and Mr. Dulles spent the intervening time prior to the 1400 hours session with the Congressional leaders in preparation of his statement. Mr. Bissell shortly returned to the Department of State and attended the session which prepared a first draft of the statement for the Secretary of State. Mr. Dulles did not participate in this drafting session. Shortly before 1400 hours Mr. Dulles and Mr. Bissell joined the Secretary of State and drove with him to the Congressional hearing room. While driving to the Capitol, Mr. Dulles showed Mr. Herter the text of his proposed remarks. General Cabell, Mr. Lundahl and Mr. Warner joined the group at the Capitol.

May 10-11:

14. There were no substantive developments on Tuesday, 10 May, but on Wednesday, 11 May, the President held his press conference. This brings the chronological account up to date as of the time the Secretary of State and then, later, the President left for Paris.

May 16:

15. On 16 May, the President announced from Paris that high altitude reconnaissance flights over the Soviet Union had been suspended since the U-2 incident, in accordance with a decision made on 12 May, and that "these flights would not be resumed." The President explained that the 12 May decision has not been made public.